

Message Text

SECRET

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DRAFTED BY: NEA:ESWALKER

APPROVED BY: NEA:ESWALKER

S/S:MR. BORG

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 153671 TOSEC 050033

NODIS

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE, JUNE 30, FROM AMMAN RPTD
TO YOU:

QUOTE S E C R E T AMMAN 4392

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, JO, SY, PLO, MO

SUBJECT: TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER ON MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS

1. EVENING JUNE 29 ON SOCIAL OCCASION HAD OPPORTUNITY
TO TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER RIFAI AT SOME LENGTH. WE
WILL BE FOLLOWING UP AGAIN ON JUNE 30.

2. PRIME MINISTER OPENED BY NOTING THAT HE HAD PAID
A "SECRET" VISIT TO DAMASCUS ON FRIDAY, JUNE 27. (I
HAD HEARD ABOUT THIS VISIT FROM A RELIABLE SOURCE WHO
SAW RIFAI LEAVE.) RIFAI SAID THE VISIT HAD BEEN
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AT HIS REQUEST AND THAT HE HAD TALKED WITH KHADDAM

ABOUT HIS WASHINGTON TRIP, BUT KHADDAM WOULD BE COMING
HERE OFFICIALLY TO DEBRIEF JORDANIANS IN NEXT FEW DAYS.

3. PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF THE TRIP WAS TO INFORM THE
SYRIANS OF AN APPROACH MADE TO THE JORDANIANS
BY THE PLO THROUGH MOROCCANS. RIFAI FLEW TO
LONDON LAST WEEK TO MEET WITH AHMED BEN SOUDA ABOUT
THIS SUBJECT. JORDANIANS HAD PLAYED ON SYRIAN
IRRITATION WITH PLO BY FLYING TO DAMASCUS IMMEDIATELY
FOLLOWING PLO APPROACH AND TELLING SYRIANS ALL ABOUT
WHAT HAD OCCURRED. RIFAI INDICATED THERE HAD BEEN
SOME SPECIFIC DETAILS RAISED WITH HIM BY BEN SOULD
ON WHICH HE WOULD BRIEF ME LATER. RIFAI SAID THE
SYRIANS ACTED IN PREDICTABLE FASHION, BOTH GRATEFUL
FOR FILLING THEM IN ON PLO END-RUN AND APPARENTLY
IRRITATED AT PLO FOR JUMPING OUT OF SYRIAN CHANNEL
FOR DEALING WITH JORDANIANS OVER QUESTION OF
FUTURE RELATIONSHIPS. FROM WHAT RIFAI TELLS ME
IT APPEARS ARAFAT WANTS AGAIN TO TRY TO MAKE SOME DIRECT
CONTACT WITH JORDANIANS.

4. RIFAI SAYS THE PLO IS FINDING ITSELF IN INCREASINGLY
DIFFICULT POSITION FROM ALL THAT HE CAN
JUDGE. ARAFAT SEEMS TO BE TRYING FOR A NEW OPENING
WITH THE JORDANIANS IN AN EFFORT TO INSURE THAT WHATEVER
BENEFITS CAN BE DERIVED FROM AN IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP
WITH JORDAN ARE MADE AVAILABLE TO HIM.
WE CANNOT SPECULATE ON WHAT ARAFAT MIGHT ACTUALLY
SEE IN THIS SORT OF OPENING AND CAN ONLY CONCLUDE
THAT IN SOME PRELIMINARY WAY PERHAPS ARAFAT WANTS
AGAIN TO ENTER INTO DISCUSSIONS WITH THE JORDANIANS
LOOKING TOWARD SOME JOINT OR COMBINED EFFORT IN
FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS.

5. RIFAI SAID THAT KHADDAM WAS NOT COMPLIMENTARY
ABOUT HIS WASHINGTON VISIT. HE TOLD RIFAI THERE
WAS REALLY NOTHING VERY NEW IN WASHINGTON AND THAT
HE CAME AWAY FEELING THAT THE AMERICANS HAD REALLY
NO IDEA ABOUT WHERE THEY WERE TO BE GOING IN THE
FUTURE. RIFAI HIMSELF INDICATED INCREASED CONCERN
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THAT THE US HAD BECOME AN EMASCULATED GIANT IN THE
MIDDLE EAST AND THAT WE WERE ONLY PROVING TO THE
WORLD WE DID NOT HAVE THE WILL OR CAPACITY TO INFLUENCE
THE SITUATION. WE THEN DISCUSSED AT
LENGTH ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE AND RIFAI'S FAVORITE
THEME THAT IF THE US REALLY WANTED TO DO SOMETHING
IT COULD DO SO WITH THE ISRAELIS; IF WE
PUT ON THE HEAT, THEY WOULD HAVE TO FALL

INTO LINE. WHILE HE IS INCREASINGLY ACCEPTING
OF THE FACT THAT THE PROBLEM IS MUCH MORE COMPLEX,
HE RETURNS TO HIS OLD BASIC THEMES ON THESE
OCCASIONS. IT IS CLEAR FROM ALL RIFAI HAD TO SAY
THAT SYRIANS APPRECIATED THE OPPORTUNITY TO
EXCHANGE VIEWS, BUT ARE NOT TELLING THEIR ARAB
FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES THAT THEY CAME AWAY FROM
WASHINGTON WITH MUCH HOPE IN MIND FOR THE FUTURE.

6. RECOMMEND DEPARTMENT PASS CAIRO, DAMAASCUS, BEIRUT
AND RABAT. PICKERING UNQUOTE. INGERSOLL

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